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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon (D-LA) announced today Louisiana and Terrebonne Parish will receive a total of \$48,956,431 in federal grants from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The grants will help provide affordable housing and rental assistance for low- and moderate-income Louisianians, support more emergency homeless shelters, and increase home ownership by assisting eligible first-time homebuyers with down payments and closing costs.

**"Housing costs in Louisiana have skyrocketed, especially since Katrina and Rita, and many working families struggle to find affordable housing or make the rent payment each month,"** said Rep. Melancon. **"Decent, affordable housing is the foundation of strong communities. These federal grants will help our towns and parishes in south Louisiana prosper by assisting families with obtaining one of life's most basic necessities: a secure place to call home."**

The grants awarded to the State of Louisiana are distributed through the Office of Community Development and the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency. The grants for Terrebonne Parish will be allocated for projects within the community by the Parish. Both the state and the parish can use their own discretion when awarding the grants, within the parameters of the specific HUD programs through which the grants were awarded.

### ***State of Louisiana Grants***

- **\$29,497,333 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for creating economic opportunities and providing decent housing for low- and moderate- income persons.** The CDBG program develops stronger communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment. These CDBG funds are distributed through the Office of Community Development (OCD). OCD recently allocated these grants to several communities in the Third Congressional District, including New Iberia, Berwick, Ascension Parish, St. Charles Parish, and St. Mary Parish.

- **\$15,008,749 to provide housing units and tenant-based rental assistance for low-income individuals through the HOME grant program.** HOME is the largest federal block grant program for state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households.

- **\$1,569,127 to increase the number of homeless shelters in Louisiana through the Emergency Shelter Grants program (ESG).** The state of Louisiana will direct this grant money to areas which have the greatest need for Emergency Shelter programs.

- **\$975,000 for Louisiana to supply housing assistance and support services for low-income people who are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS through the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program (HOPWA).**

- **\$183,291 to aid eligible first-time homebuyers with down payments and closing costs through the American Dream Down payment Initiative (ADDI).** ADDI, part of the HOME program, aims to increase home ownership, especially among lower income and minority households, and to revitalize and stabilize communities. This grant is distributed by the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency.

### ***Houma-Terrebonne Grants***

- **\$1,265,054 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for Houma-Terrebonne.** The CDBG program is one of the longest running HUD programs and has been highly successful in serving a wide range of community housing needs through grants to both states and local communities such as Houma and surrounding Terrebonne Parish.

- **\$457,877 to provide housing units and tenant-based rental assistance for low-income individuals in Houma-Terrebonne from the HOME grant program.**

**"Owning your own home is part of the American Dream, and these ADDI grants will assist many disadvantaged Louisianians with buying their first home, helping them rise out of poverty and into the economic middle class,"** added Rep. Melancon.

In Congress, Rep. Melancon has worked to increase the availability of affordable housing for the people of south Louisiana. Last week, he voted for the Section 8 Housing Reform Act of 2007 (SEVRA). Section 8 housing vouchers provide essential rental assistance to low-income families, seniors, and the disabled. The Section 8 Housing Reform Act of 2007 encourages

home ownership by allowing eligible low-income families to use Section 8 vouchers as down payments for first homes or for the purchase of manufactured homes on leased land. SEVRA also increases the number of families who will have access to these crucial vouchers. The bipartisan bill also improves access to these vouchers for families in rural areas.

Additionally, Rep. Melancon has supported efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing in south Louisiana, especially in communities still recovering from the 2005 hurricanes. In May, Rep. Melancon voted for the Housing Finance Reform Act/Affordable Housing Fund (H.R. 1427), which would create a non-taxpayer-financed housing program that will dedicate an estimated \$600 million to the construction of affordable housing in areas of Louisiana and Mississippi still recovering from Hurricane Katrina. The bill was passed by the House of Representatives and is awaiting a vote in the Senate.

Rep. Melancon is also a strong supporter of the bipartisan Katrina Housing Tax Relief Act of 2007 (H.R. 1562), which strengthens federal tax incentives for building affordable rental housing in the hurricane-affected areas of the Gulf Coast. The bill also expands access to low-interest financing for home repairs and reconstructions in hurricane-affected areas. Rep. Melancon worked to include these housing provisions in the most recent Iraq/Katrina Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, which was signed into law in May.

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